

FOR
VETERANS

EDUCATION BENEFITS

The VA pays monthly benefits to eligible veterans, dependents, reservists, and service members while they are in an approved training program such as college, on-the-job training, and various kinds of technical training. Our major programs are:

- **Montgomery GI Bill**
Persons who first entered active duty after June 30, 1985, and had money deducted from their military pay are generally eligible. You can use these benefits in service or out of service. Some Vietnam Era veterans and certain veterans separated under special programs are also eligible. The Montgomery GI Bill also includes a program for members of the Selected Reserve and National Guard members.
- **Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP)**
This program is for veterans who entered active duty for the first time after December 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985, and contributed to an education fund.
- **Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance**
Some spouses and children are eligible for education benefits.

What Are the Time Limits for Using Benefits?

Generally, the following time limits apply. These time limits can sometimes be extended.

Veterans have 10 years from the date they were last released from active duty to use their education benefits.

Reservists and National Guard members have 10 years from their eligibility date, which is determined by the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation.

Spouses have 10 years from the date VA determines them eligible.

Children are generally eligible from age 18 until age 26.

How Do You Find Out If You're Eligible?

To find out if you are eligible for VA educational assistance, you must send VA an application. If you are a service member, veteran, reservist, or National Guard, use VA Form 22-1990, *Application for Education Benefits*. If you are the child or spouse of a veteran, use VA Form 22-5490, *Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance*.

To get an application or for more information, visit our website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call us at 1-888-GI BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

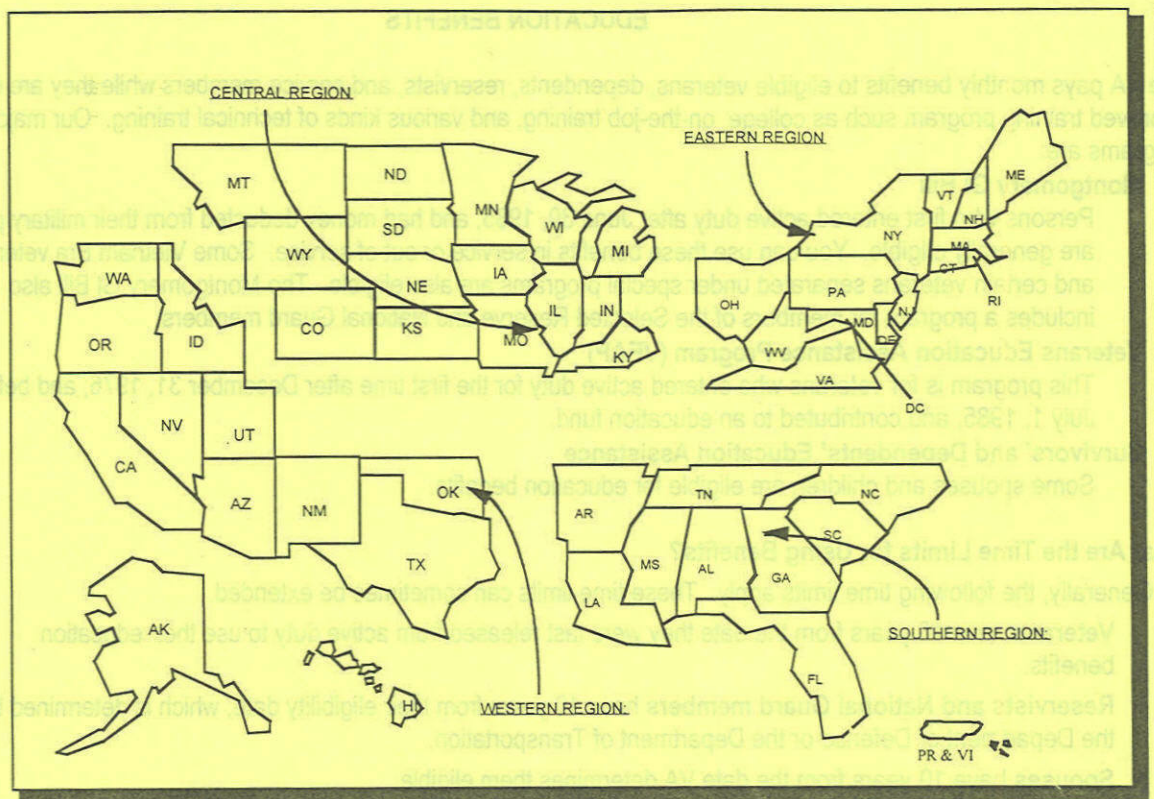
See the map on the back of this fact sheet to find out where to mail your completed application.

It is a good idea to send in this application now, even if you don't plan to start school right away. That way you will be sure to have the VA information you need when planning for your education.

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Which VA Office Handles Your Education Claim?

There are four regional education processing offices that handle claims for the entire country, divided into four regions. The map below shows the states in each region. Find the state where you'll be attending school or job training. You should mail inquiries or claims for education benefits to the processing office for that region.



CENTRAL REGION:

VA Regional Office
PO Box 66830
St. Louis, MO 63166-6830

e-mail: STLRPO@vba.va.gov

EASTERN REGION:

VA Regional Office
PO Box 4616
Buffalo, NY 14240-4616

e-mail: BUFFRPO@vba.va.gov

WESTERN REGION:

VA Regional Office
PO Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

e-mail: MUSKRPO@vba.va.gov

SOUTHERN REGION:

VA Regional Office
PO Box 100022
Decatur, GA 30031-7022

e-mail: ATLRPO@vba.va.gov

For more information, visit our web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call our toll-free number, 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

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LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS

If you are in the military or recently separated from the military, you may be eligible for life insurance. Two regular and two insurance programs for the disabled are currently available to new policyholders.

Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)

This program is open to active-duty members and reservists of the uniformed services.

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)

This program is open to individuals released from active duty and to separated reservists if applied for within 16 months of release or separation. SGLI can be converted into VGLI or a commercial policy upon separation. Early partial payment of proceeds is available to terminally ill policyholders.

Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI)

This program is open to veterans with service-connected disabilities. Application must be made within 2 years of service-connected disability rating.

Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI)

This program is open to veterans who are granted specially adapted housing grants.

Related Insurance Topics

- Premium payments
- Increasing insurance
- Reinstating lapsed insurance
- Converting term policies
- Plans of insurance
- Disability provisions
- Changes of address
- Policy loans
- Naming beneficiaries
- Reporting the death of the insured

For more information about the related insurance topics or about government life insurance, call the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia toll-free at **1-800-669-8477** or visit the VA website at www.insurance.va.gov

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HOME BENEFITS

VA does not directly loan money, but it guarantees the lender against loss if the borrower fails to repay the loan. VA loan guaranties are made to service members, veterans, reservists, and unmarried surviving spouses to purchase, construct, repair, or improve a dwelling that the veteran will own and occupy as his or her home. This includes the purchase of a townhouse or condominium unit in a project that has been approved by VA. Loans may also be made to refinance an existing loan on a home that the veteran owns and occupies. Except for manufactured (mobile) homes, a down payment is generally not required if the purchase price is less than the reasonable value of the property.

Eligibility

- Eligibility for a VA-guaranteed loan varies according to the length of time on active duty after September 16, 1940.
- You must be a satisfactory credit risk and have enough income to support yourself and your family after you make the mortgage payments, pay the costs of home ownership, and pay other obligations. You must agree to live in the property.

To get a certificate of eligibility for a home loan, complete VA Form 26-1880, *Request for a Certificate of Eligibility for VA Home Loan Benefits*, and mail it, with a copy of your latest discharge or separation papers, to the VA Eligibility Center nearest to you. If you are still on active duty, you will need to provide a Statement of Service. (See instructions on the reverse side of VA Form 26-1880.)

Los Angeles Eligibility Center
P.O. Box 240097
Los Angeles, CA 90024

VA Loan Eligibility Center
P. O. Box 20729
Winston-Salem, NC 27120

If you were separated from active duty after January 1, 1950, you must submit a copy of your DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*.

For a \$43,000 Grant. VA may approve a grant of not more than 50 percent of the cost of building, buying, or remodeling adapted homes or paying indebtedness on those homes already acquired, up to a maximum of \$43,000. To be eligible for this grant, veterans must be entitled to compensation for a permanent service-connected disability due to:

- loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, so the veterans must use braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair to get around; or
- disability that includes: (a) blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus (b) loss or loss of use of one lower extremity; or

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- loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with: (a) an effect of organic disease or injury, or (b) the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity which so affects the functions of balance or walking so the veterans must use canes, crutches, or a wheelchair to get around.

For an \$8,250 Grant. VA may approve a grant up to a maximum of \$8,250 for necessary adaptations to a service-disabled veteran's residence. The grant also may be used to assist veterans in acquiring a residence that already has been adapted with special features for the veteran's disability. To be eligible for these grants, veterans must be entitled to compensation for a permanent service-connected disability due to: (1) blindness in both eyes with 5/200 visual acuity or less or (2) loss or loss of use of both hands.

Related Home Benefits Topics

- Guaranty amount
- Occupancy requirement
- Closing costs
- Financing, interest rates, and terms
- Release from liability
- Direct home loans for Native Americans (on trust land)
- Acquired (repossessed) houses
- Safeguards for veterans

For more information about the related home benefits topics or the Loan Guaranty Program, please call our toll-free number, **1-800-827-1000**, or visit our website at **www.homeloans.va.gov**

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DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND PENSION BENEFITS

You may be eligible for compensation for injuries or illnesses you suffer as a result of active duty or for any you had before service that were made worse because of your active duty service.

What is VA Disability Compensation? Disability Compensation is a benefit paid to a veteran because of injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty or were made worse by active military service. The benefits are tax-free.

How Much Does VA Pay for Disability Compensation? The basic benefits are based on how disabled you are. Your benefits may be increased if:

- You have very severe disabilities to include loss of limb(s).
- You have a spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s).
- You have a seriously disabled spouse.

Disability Compensation Topics

Prisoners of War: Former prisoners of war who were incarcerated for at least 30 days are considered eligible for disability compensation if they become at least 10 percent disabled from diseases associated with being held as a prisoner of war.

Agent Orange and Other Herbicides: Nine diseases are considered service-related for compensation purposes for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides in Vietnam. They are chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, soft-tissue sarcoma, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, respiratory cancers, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy.

Veterans Exposed to Radiation: Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation while on active duty may be eligible for disability compensation if they have disabilities related to that exposure.

Gulf War Related Conditions: Gulf War veterans who suffer from chronic disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses may receive disability compensation. The illnesses must have begun during active duty during the Gulf War or become evident to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time through December 31, 2001.

Allowances for Dependents: Veterans whose service-connected disabilities are rated at 30 percent or more are entitled to additional allowances for dependents. The additional amount is determined according to the number of dependents and the degree of disability. A disabled veteran evaluated 30 percent or more is entitled to a special allowance for a spouse who is in need of the aid and attendance of another person.

Incarcerated Veterans: VA benefits are restricted if a veteran, surviving spouse, child, or dependent parent is convicted of a felony and imprisoned for more than 60 days. The disability compensation paid to an incarcerated veteran is limited to the 10 percent disability rate. Any amounts not paid may be apportioned to eligible dependents. Payments are not reduced when the recipient is participating in a work-release program, residing in a halfway house, or under community control.

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What is Disability Pension? Disability Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans with limited income if they are no longer able to work.

Who is Eligible to Receive a Disability Pension?

You may be eligible if:

- You were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, AND
- You served 90 days or more of active duty with at least one day during a period of war, AND
- You have disabilities that keep you from working a regular, full-time job, AND
- Your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law.

How Much Does VA Pay?

VA pays you the difference between your countable family income and the yearly income limit which describes your situation. This difference is usually paid in 12 equal monthly payments.

Disability Pension Topics

Improved Pension: Veterans with low incomes may be eligible for monetary support if they served 90 days or more of active military service, one day of which was during a period of war. The veteran must be permanently and totally disabled for reasons other than the veteran's own willful misconduct. The pension is reduced by the amount of the countable income of the veteran and the income of the spouse or dependent children. When a veteran without a spouse or a child is being furnished nursing home or domiciliary care by VA, the pension cannot exceed \$90 per month.

Protected Pension Programs: Pensioners entitled to benefits as of December 31, 1978, who choose not to receive a pension under the Improved Pension Program continue to receive pension benefits at the rate they were entitled to receive on December 31, 1978, as long as they remain permanently and totally disabled, do not lose a dependent, and their incomes do not exceed the income limitation.

Aid and Attendance or Housebound: A veteran who is a patient in a nursing home, who is otherwise determined by VA to be in need of the regular aid and attendance of another person, or who is permanently housebound may be entitled to higher income limitations or additional benefits, depending on the type of pension received.

Other Disability Benefits

Automobile Assistance: Veterans and service members qualify for this benefit if they have service-connected loss of one or both hands or feet or permanent loss of use or permanent impairment of vision of both eyes (VA regulations specify how great the impairment must be in order to qualify for this benefit). Veterans entitled to compensation for ankylosis of one or both knees or one or both hips may be eligible for adaptive equipment for an automobile.

Clothing Allowance: Any veteran who is entitled to receive compensation for a service-connected disability for which he or she uses prosthetic or orthopedic appliances may receive an annual clothing allowance. The allowance also is available to any veteran whose service-connected skin condition requires prescribed medication that damages the veteran's outer garments.

For information on these topics, visit VA's web site at www.vba.va.gov

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VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program assists veterans with service-connected disabilities by offering them services and assistance to prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. Through the VR&E program, a disabled veteran may receive:

- Assistance finding and maintaining suitable employment.
- An evaluation of abilities, skills, and interests.
- Vocational counseling and planning.
- If needed, training such as on-the-job and non-paid work experiences.
- If needed, training such as certificate and two- or four-year college programs.
- Supportive rehabilitation services and additional counseling.

VA provides employment-related benefits and services to veterans with disabilities, transitioning service members, and certain veterans' dependents. VA offers:

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Services

Veterans with disabilities may receive vocational rehabilitation and employment services to overcome barriers that prevent them from obtaining employment. VA provides employment assistance, counseling/guidance, training or education, and personal and work-adjustment training.

Vocational-Educational Career Counseling

Service members, veterans, and certain veterans' dependents are provided with vocational and educational guidance and counseling to assist them in selecting an appropriate career goal and training institution.

Vocational Training Program for Certain Vietnam Veterans' Children with Spina Bifida

VA may provide to certain Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida limited vocational training, employment assistance, and other related rehabilitation services to achieve a vocational goal, including employment.

For more information, visit our website at www.vba.gov

Transition Assistance Program (TAP/DTAP)

The Transition Assistance Program provides to exiting service members, with and without disabilities, assistance with employment placement and information on employment programs.

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Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)

This office helps small businesses obtain information on acquiring contracts with VA. Federal offices are required to place a portion of their contracts and purchases with small and disadvantaged businesses. VA also promotes business with veterans by encouraging VA contracting offices to include veteran-owned contractors in mailings to solicit bids. For more information, write to OSDBU (OOSB) at the Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20420, or visit the OSDBU website at www.va.gov/OSDBU

VA Partners:

Other agencies work with VA to provide assistance and employment benefits to veterans with disabilities and separating service members. For example:

- Job-Finding Assistance – Free job counseling, testing, referral, and placement services. Contact the nearest state employment office and present a copy of your military discharge (DD Form 214).
- Unemployment Compensation – For more information, contact the nearest state employment office and present a copy of your military discharge (DD Form 214).
- Federal Jobs for Veterans – For more information, contact Career America Connection at **1-912-757-3000** or visit their website at www.usajobs.opm.gov
- Employment and Re-employment Rights – For more information, visit the Department of Labor web site at www.dol.gov/dol/vets
- Small Business Administration (SBA) – For more information, contact the nearest SBA office or call **1-800-827-5722**.

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HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Most veterans must apply for enrollment in order to receive health care benefits. Veterans may apply at any time. Once enrolled, veterans are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package of inpatient and outpatient services that include:

- Drugs and pharmaceuticals
- Preventive medicine services
- Primary care
- Surgery
- Emergency care
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Home health care
- Respite and hospice care
- Homeless veterans programs

Service-connected veterans are eligible for treatment of their service-connected disability even if they have not enrolled.

Health Care Enrollment

To receive care, veterans generally must be enrolled with VA. A veteran may apply for enrollment at any time by calling **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**. Once enrolled, veterans are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package of inpatient and outpatient services, including preventive and primary care.

Once enrolled, veterans are part of a national health care system with over 1,100 service sites.

Financial Assessment for Health Care

Certain veterans applying for enrollment for health care must provide VA with information on their annual income and net worth in order to determine whether they are below the Means Test threshold. For those veterans who measure above the Means Test, the law requires that the veteran agrees to pay a co-payment. (Except veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart.) VA forms are available on the VA website, <http://www.va.gov/forms>

What is the Means Test?

The Means Test is an annual measure of your household income and assets. This includes your spouse's income and your dependent children's income. For information on how to do a Means Test, call toll-free, **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**.

Billing Health Insurance Companies

When applying for medical care, you must provide information pertaining to your health insurance coverage, including your spouse's insurance policy.

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A veteran's eligibility for VA health care benefits is not affected by health insurance coverage. Eligibility criteria relate to military service and, in some cases, to income and type of medical service needed.

If you are currently covered by a health plan (insurance policy), you must notify VA when registering for VA health care. Regardless of the insurance company, and regardless of who is the primary owner of the policy, VA is required by law to bill that health insurance company for nonservice-connected medical care.

If the full cost of your care is not recovered, VA will not collect nor hold you responsible for the charges not covered by the insurance company. However, there are instances where you must make a co-payment if certain income and asset is over the limits set by law.

Family Health Benefits

CHAMPVA, the VA Civilian Health and Medical Program, shares the cost of medical care for dependents and survivors of veterans. If not eligible for TRICARE (the medical program for civilian dependents provided by the Department of Defense) or Medicare, Part A, as a result of reaching age 65, the following people are eligible for CHAMPVA:

- The spouse or child of a veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability.
- The spouse or child of a veteran who died of a service-connected condition or was totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death.
- The spouse or child of a person who died in the line of duty, if death was not caused by misconduct.

For more information, call our toll-free number, **1-877-222-VETS (8387)** or visit our website at www.va.gov/hac

Outpatient Pharmacy Services

Outpatient pharmacy services are provided to all enrolled veterans receiving VA health care. The following veterans are not required to pay a co-payment:

- Veterans receiving medication for treatment of a service-connected condition.
- Veterans who are 50% or more service-connected.
- Veterans whose income does not exceed the annual maximum VA pension income amount.

Other veterans may be charged a co-payment for each 30-day or less supply of medication.

Eyeglasses, Hearing Aids, and Dental Care

Eyeglasses and hearing aids normally require a service-connected rating of 10% or more but are not usually provided for normal hearing or vision loss unrelated to military service.

Routine dental treatment for teeth or jaw is provided only to veterans who are 100% service-connected or are ex-prisoners of war who were detained 90 days or more. Limited dental treatment may be provided if the dental problem is affecting a medical condition.

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Vet Centers

VA provides readjustment counseling to any veteran who served in the military in a theater of combat operations during any period of war, or in any area during a period in which armed hostilities occurred. VA Vet Centers are small community-based facilities that provide a holistic mix of counseling and community social services, psychological counseling for veterans exposed to war trauma to include post-traumatic stress disorder, family counseling when needed for the veteran's readjustment, community outreach and education, and extensive case management and referral activities. The Vet Centers are located in the community, outside of the larger medical facilities.

Women's Programs

Women veterans are eligible for the same VA benefits as male veterans.

Services and benefits for women veterans include breast and pelvic examinations and other general reproductive health care services, except in vitro fertilization.

Preventive health care includes counseling, contraceptive services, menopause management, Pap smears, and mammography. If VA is unable to provide such services, referrals are made to a private practitioner for such services.

VA health care professionals provide counseling and treatment to help women overcome psychological trauma resulting from personal and sexual assault during military service. Care also is provided for any injury, illness, or psychological condition resulting from such trauma.

Women Veterans Coordinators are available at all VA facilities to assist women seeking treatment and benefits. VA medical centers have made many structural changes to ensure privacy for women veterans.

National Mammography Hotline: **1-888-492-7844**.

For more information on health care benefits, please call our toll-free number, **1-877-222-VETS (8387)** or visit our website at **www.va.gov**

Change in Eligibility for Veterans Awarded the Purple Heart

Effective November 30, 1999, veterans who present verifiable proof of being awarded the Purple Heart are no longer required to complete a Means Test or pay a co-payment for their medical care. However, unless you fall within one of the groups listed in the Fact Sheet under Outpatient Pharmacy Services, you will still be required to pay applicable medication co-payments.

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FAMILY AND SURVIVOR BENEFITS

Some family members of disabled or deceased veterans are eligible for certain benefits.

Medical Care for Dependents and Survivors

The VA Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA) shares the cost of medical care for dependents and survivors of veterans. For more information, call our toll-free number, 1-800-733-8387, or visit our website at www.va.gov/hac or write to the VA Health Administration Center, PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments may be available for surviving spouses who have not remarried, unmarried dependent children under age 18, helpless children, children between 18 and 23 if attending a VA-approved school, and low-income parents of deceased service members or veterans. To be eligible, the deceased must have died from: (1) a disease or injury incurred or aggravated while on active duty or active duty training; (2) an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on inactive duty training; or (3) a disability compensable by VA. Death cannot be the result of willful misconduct. If a spouse remarries, eligibility for benefits may be restored if the marriage is terminated later by death or divorce.

DIC payments may also be authorized for survivors of veterans who were totally disabled by reason of service-connected disability(ies) at the time of death but whose deaths were not the result of their service-connected disability. The survivor qualifies if: (1) the veteran was continuously rated totally disabled for a period of 10 or more years immediately preceding death or (2) the veteran was so rated for a period of at least 5 years from the date of military discharge. The discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable.

DIC Payments to Surviving Spouse

Surviving spouses of veterans who die after January 1, 1993, receive a monthly payment. For a spouse entitled to DIC, based on the veteran's death prior to January 1, 1993, the amount paid may be based on the veteran's grade. An additional allowance may be granted to pay for their aid and attendance by another person.

DIC Payments to Parents and Children

The monthly payment for parents of deceased veterans depends upon the parents' income. Also, an additional allowance may be granted to pay for their aid and attendance by another person. There are additional DIC payments for dependent children. A child may be eligible if there is no surviving spouse, and the child is unmarried and under age 18, or if the child is between the age of 18 and 23 and attending school.

Spina Bifida Benefits

Spina bifida patients who are children of Vietnam veterans are eligible for vocational training, health care, and a monthly allowance. Contact a VA regional office to apply for medical treatment or benefits payments.

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Death Pension

Death pensions based on need are available for surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with service during a period of war. Spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school. Pension is not payable to those with estates large enough to provide maintenance. The veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge for disability. Children who become incapable of self-support because of a disability before age 18 may be eligible for a pension as long as the condition exists, unless the child marries or the child's income exceeds the established limit. A surviving spouse may be entitled to higher income limitations or additional benefits if living in a nursing home, is in need of aid and attendance by another person, or is permanently housebound.

The Improved Pension program provides a monthly payment to bring an eligible person's income to a level established by law. The payment is reduced by the annual income from other sources such as Social Security paid to the surviving spouse or dependent children. Medical expenses may be deducted from the income ceiling. Pension is not payable to those who have assets that can be used to provide adequate maintenance.

Education Benefits

Education benefits are available to unremarried spouses and children of:

- Veterans who died or are permanently and totally disabled because of a disability arising from active military service.
- Veterans who died from any cause while rated permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disability.
- Service members listed for more than 90 days as currently missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- Service members listed for more than 90 days as currently detained or interned by a foreign government or power.

Benefits may be awarded for undergraduate or graduate training at a college or university, on-the-job training or apprenticeship, and various kinds of vocational/technical training. Spouses may take correspondence courses.

Home Loan Guaranties

A VA loan guaranty to acquire a home may be available to an unremarried spouse of a veteran or service member who died as a result of service-connected disabilities or to a spouse of a service member who has been officially listed as missing in action or as a prisoner of war for more than 90 days.

Montgomery GI Bill (Active Duty Death Benefit)

VA will pay a special Montgomery GI Bill death benefit to a designated survivor in the event of the service-connected death of a service member while on active duty or within one year after discharge or release. The deceased must either have been entitled to educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill program or a participant in the program who would have been so entitled but for a high school diploma or length of service requirement.

You may also qualify for work-study allowance. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

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BURIAL BENEFITS

Burial in National Cemeteries

- 119 national cemeteries (61 are active).
- Full-casket burials and burial of cremated remains.
- Dependents under 21 may be buried in a national cemetery.
- Cremation gardens.
- Memorial areas.

Symbolic Expressions of Remembrance

- Headstones and markers shipped worldwide.
- Headstones and markers for veterans buried in state cemeteries.
- Headstones and markers for veterans buried in private cemeteries.
- Memorial markers for veterans whose remains were not recovered or were donated to science.

Presidential Memorial Certificates

Certificates bearing the signature of the President are issued honoring the service of deceased veterans with honorable discharges. Eligible recipients include next of kin and other loved ones.

Burial Flags

An American flag is provided to drape the casket of a veteran or to accompany the urn. After the service, the flag may be given to the next of kin, or may be donated to a VA national cemetery for the Avenue of Flags, where appropriate.

National Shrines

VA national cemeteries are maintained as national shrines dedicated to preserving our nation's history, nurturing patriotism and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans have made.

Eligibility

Veterans with other than dishonorable discharges, their spouses and dependent children may be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. Reservists and National Guard members with 20 years qualifying service (who are entitled to retired pay or would be entitled if at least 60 years of age), have earned the honor of burial in a national cemetery. Service members who die on active duty may also be buried in a national cemetery.

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Military Honors

Military honors are provided by the Department of Defense and are arranged in advance by the family or their representative. National Cemetery staff will be pleased to assist in arranging for the honors to be provided, if available.

Gravesites in VA national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance. Families are encouraged to prepare in advance by discussing cemetery options, by collecting the veteran's military information and by calling the cemetery where burial is desired prior to the time of need.

Funeral directors or one of your local veterans' service organizations will assist you with making burial arrangements.

For information on monetary benefits or other burial benefits, please call our toll-free number, **1-800-827-1000**, or visit our website at www.cem.va.gov.

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OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE BENEFITS

Benefits for Special Groups

Benefits for special groups are listed in *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* pamphlet or on the web at www.va.gov/pubaff/fedben/00fedben.pdf

Homeless Veterans' Services

- Outreach to veterans living on streets and in shelters.
- Clinical assessment and referral to medical treatment for physical and psychiatric disorders, including substance abuse.
- Long-term sheltered transitional assistance, case management, and rehabilitation.
- Employment assistance and linkage with available income supports.
- Supported permanent housing.

Homeless Veterans Programs

- VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program.
- VA Assistance to Stand Downs.
- Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill (HCMI) veterans program.
- Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV).
- Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) Program.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development/VA Supported Housing (HUD-VASH).
- Drop-In Centers.
- Social Security Administration and VA Outreach Program.
- Comprehensive homeless centers.
- VBA-VHA Special Outreach and Benefits Assistance.
- VBA's Acquired Property Sales for Homeless Providers.
- VA Excess Property for Homeless Veterans Initiative.
- Program Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education, and Networking Groups (CHALENG).

For more information on homeless services and programs, contact your nearest VA facility.

Overseas Benefits

Beneficiaries who live in foreign countries should contact the nearest American Embassy or Consulate for information and claims assistance. In Canada, veterans should contact an office of the Veterans Affairs Canada.

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ELIGIBILITY AND DISCHARGE

Military Service Discharge Information

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge (other than dishonorable) from active military service. You should keep your DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release of Discharge from Active Duty*, or other discharge documents, in a safe location that you and your next of kin or designated representative can easily get.

Replacing Military Records

If you need to replace your military records, use Standard Form 180, *Request Pertaining to Military Records*. You may get this form at a VA regional office or from our website at www.va.gov/forms

Review of Discharges

You may apply for a review of your discharge. Write to the military department concerned using DD Form 293, *Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal From the Armed Forces of the United States*. You may get this form at a VA regional office or from our website at www.va.gov/forms

Correction of Military Records

If you feel your military records contain an error, you may apply for a correction of your military records. Use DD Form 149, *Application for Correction of Military Records*, available at a VA regional office or from our website at www.va.gov/forms

Transition Assistance Programs

Transition Assistance Programs provide information to help you make the transition to civilian life easier. These programs tell you about the many benefits that may be available to you. VA encourages you to contact your Family Service Centers/Transition Center to find out when the Transition Assistance briefings will be held at a location convenient to you.

Eligibility

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge (other than dishonorable) from active military service. Active service means full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Environmental Services Administration, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Eligibility of benefits depends upon individual circumstances. To apply, please contact the nearest VA regional office or call VA's toll-free number, **1-800-827-1000**.

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Health Care Enrollment and Eligibility

For health care applications and eligibility procedures, please call VA's toll-free number, **1-800-827-1000**, visit our website at **www.va.gov/health/elig**, or contact your nearest VA hospital or health care facility.

Filing Claims

If you are seeking a VA benefit for the first time, you must submit a copy of your DD Form 214 or other discharge document with your application for benefits.

Important Documents to Have

- DD Form 214 or other discharge documents
- Veteran's birth certificate
- Veteran's marriage certificate
- Children's birth certificates
- Veteran's death certificate

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FOR VETERANS

WHO TO CONTACT

For health emergencies, call 911	
General Benefits	
VA Hotline (disability, compensation, pension, home loan, education, burial, vocational rehabilitation, survivor, and insurance benefits)	1-800-827-1000
Education and Training	1-888-442-4551
Status of ordered Headstones and/or Markers	1-800-697-6947
Life Insurance	1-800-669-8477
Veterans Benefits in Canada (other than health care)	1-802-296-5177*
Health Care Benefits	
Veterans Health Care	1-877-222-VETS
Veterans Health Care in Canada	1-802-296-6379*
Veterans Health Care in the Philippines	011-632-833-4566*
Veterans Health Care in All Other Countries	1-303-331-7590*
Mammography Help Line	1-888-492-7844
CHAMPVA (medical care for dependents and survivors of veterans)	1-800-733-8387
Spina Bifida	1-800-733-8387
Health Eligibility Center (How to do a Means Test for health care eligibility)	1-800-929-8387
Miscellaneous	
Debt Management Center (Information about debts owed to VA)	1-800-827-0648
Gulf War Veterans Hotline	1-800-PGW-VETS
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)	1-800-829-4833

*These are not toll-free numbers

Access by Computer

VA World Wide Web Home Page Server	http://www.va.gov/
VAONLINE Bulletin Board Service - via data line	800-US1-VETS up to 28.8KBPS at 8-N-1 modem setting.
For answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	www.va.gov/vas/vbs

To get a copy of **Federal Benefits Manual for Veterans and Dependents**, please phone, fax, or write to:

Superintendent of Documents
P.O. Box 371954
Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954
Phone: 202-512-1800 Fax: 202-512-2250

Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, and payment of \$5.00 each (\$6.25 foreign). Or download a free copy from our website at www.va.gov/pubaff/fedben/00Fedben.pdf.

VA Facilities

Facilities are listed in the White Pages of your telephone book, in **Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents**, and on the web at www.va.gov/Facilities, or simply call 1-800-827-1000.

FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

FACT SHEET



VETERANS' SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (VSOs)

A number of veterans' service organizations are federally chartered and/or recognized or approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. These VSOs may prepare, present, and prosecute VA claims.

Each VSO's service officer will, at no cost to you, the veteran, assist you prepare and manage your claims for benefits. Service office function as an advocate for the veterans and families they represent. They assist veterans and their families in filing claims for VA disability compensation, rehabilitation and education programs, pension and death benefits, employment and training programs, Social Security disability benefits, and many other programs.

For additional information or assistance, visit a VSO office in your area. Check your local telephone directory under government listings for VSO offices in your area. VSOs have representatives at most VA regional offices. You may also get information about VSOs from your VA medical center's Voluntary Service program manager. You may also see the directory of veterans' service organizations on our web site at www.va.gov/vso/index.htm

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